

liverance, and offered to their deliverer "this sacrifice of praise" and "service of song," we feel ourselves the subject of thoughts and emotions, which language is utterly inadequate to embody, and which naturally lead us to that period when a mightier multitude, whom no man can number, exulting in the bliss of a Divine deliverance, are to stand upon the margin of a new world, and looking on the extinction of all their enemies, to "sing the song of Moses and the Lamb." [*Burney's Service of Song*, pp. 15-16.]

From this incident we gather some important information regarding music and song at this early age among the Israelites. The song itself was unquestionably inspired of God, and having been given to be sung, the service was by his appointment. But the knowledge of music, the capacity to appreciate poetry so elaborate, and the taste and skill to sing it in an appropriate manner, were not gifts communicated to them miraculously at the moment. The song was given to those who were already capable of singing it. The instruments of music by which it was accompanied were not then made by God. The people must have had them already in Egypt. Nor was the mode of performance new.

It is evident therefore that the Israelites must have been at this time a musical people. Even under the heaviest weight of their bitter bondage they found in this an alleviation of their sorrows. Though most of the references to music, which we have found in the Patriarchal ages, refer to scenes of a similar character. Yet from all the circumstances of this great service of song immediately after their deliverance from Egypt, it seems probable, if not certain, that they already used music and song in the service of the Lord. We do not find now for the first time a divine appointment to employ these for this end. We know that the mode employed on this occasion was that common among the Egyptians in scenes of rejoicing both of a civil and sacred nature, and although the circumstances in which they now sang were peculiar, and the song itself divine, the likelihood is that such a service of song was

what they had been accustomed to in the darkest night of their oppression. An Apocryphal writer, who may be regarded as expressing the traditionary information of the Jews, says in describing the bondage in Egypt: "The righteous children of good men did sacrifice secretly, the fathers singing out the songs of praise." (Wisdom 18-9.) When with palpitating hearts they left the house of bondage, they took their timbrels with them, they cared for them during their journey, they preserved them during their passage through the sea, and when in safety they stood upon the father's shore they were ready with voice and instrument, and in the enthusiastic excitement of the dance, to utter the high praises of the Lord.

The mode of performing this service is worthy of more particular attention as we find it frequently employed afterwards among the Jews, and as it was characteristic of other eastern countries both in ancient and modern times. The timbrel here spoken of was a species of hand drum or tambourine, consisting of a hoop of wood or metal, with leather stretched over it, and sometimes with small bells around it. The Egyptian monuments show three kinds of this instrument. It was in common use among the Jews on all festive occasions. (Gen. xxxi. 27; Job xxi. 12; 2 Sam. vi. 5; Isaiah v. 12, &c.) and it is still used in the East in the same manner. The mode here employed of companies going forth in rows or processions with songs and beating the tambourine, and with regulated movements of the body or in dances, was a common practice in the East in celebrating joyful events or on occasions of public festivities. Among the ancient Egyptians there were sacred songs and sacred dances, and among them the practice was as here for men and women to go forth in separate bands. Among the Israelites we find the same practice, but especially conducted by bands of young women, on occasion of victory or public rejoicing. Thus when Jephtha returned from his victory over the Ammorites "his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and dances." (Jud. xi. 34.) So when David returned from the